



## CSIS European Trilateral Nuclear Dialogues 2015 Consensus Statement

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The European Trilateral Dialogues, sponsored by CSIS in partnership with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), convene senior nuclear policy experts from the United Kingdom, France, and the United States to discuss nuclear issues and to identify areas of consensus among the three countries. The majority of the experts are former senior officials in each of the three governments; the others are well-known academics in the field. The dialogues have been unique: the U.S., UK, and French governments have rarely discussed nuclear policy and disarmament issues in a trilateral forum. Since the dialogues began, however, high-level officials from all three governments routinely join the forum and participate in the discussions. In 2015, the group's discussion has addressed a range of issues in the Euro-Atlantic security environment and beyond, prompting agreement among the group's non-governmental participants to issue the following statements reflecting the consensus views of the undersigned.

### Iran

- Regardless of individual views on the merits of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we agree that it is “the only deal in town.” There is no possibility of re-opening the negotiations if the JCPOA fails to be implemented by all sides. Put simply, the JCPOA must be made to work.
- We are concerned, however, that Iran will continue to test us: inspectors will almost certainly be challenged early in the inspection regime. The IAEA must respond firmly and insist on complete transparency. Similarly, we expect the IAEA to be transparent with the P5+1 regarding its processes and any difficulties it encounters. We believe that the full snapback of sanctions should remain the main deterrent to any Iranian violations. But the P3 should also be ready to impose flexible costs in response to low-level violations or obfuscation tactics that may fall under the snapback threshold. Vigilance is essential, as is a readiness to re-impose sanctions in the event of a significant non-compliance.
- The JCPOA, by not eliminating all enrichment and being of limited duration, does not – even assuming Iran's full compliance with its terms – permanently block Iran's capability to enrich nuclear material. It therefore has legitimized conferring treaty-compliant status on a potential “breakout” state, recognizing that Iran had attempted to pursue a nuclear weapons program under the cover of NPT membership. We will continue to seek ways for protecting and enhancing the NPT, and will examine the need for P3 action to avoid additional states seeking national enrichment to the detriment of the health of the broader NPT regime.
- While recognizing the JCPOA is not intended to establish future precedents, we believe that its ban on non-nuclear efforts to develop nuclear weapons capabilities and its focus on monitoring acquisition could be important improvements to the global non-proliferation regime. We urge our governments to take the lead over the next several years to gain acceptance for broad institutionalization of these commitments, perhaps in a revised Additional Protocol.
- We believe that the P3 states need to develop a continuing coordination and review mechanism – preferably with other members of the P5+1 – to monitor and react with flexible options in concert to Iranian behavior under the JCPOA. It is essential that the IAEA be sufficiently resourced, both



financially and in terms of human capital resources, to devote the significant and sustained attention necessary for enforcing this agreement over the full duration of its implementation.

- We would also stress the importance of Western enactment of the part of the JCPOA that deals with lifting sanctions, in order to avoid giving arguments to Iranian opponents of the agreement.

## Russia

- As we have noted in the past, the Putin Administration continues to act in defiance of international standards through its invasion of Ukraine and aggressive military posturing along NATO's borders. Further, it also continues to demonstrate that it views nuclear weapons as instruments of coercion. Russian declaratory policy is utterly inconsistent with our view of twenty-first century norms. In particular, Russia's use of nuclear intimidation and signaling against its neighbors, as well as its violation of arms control commitments, are contrary to longstanding non-proliferation leadership roles and expectations of the P5, and call into question the goal of P5 unity in the NPT context. Responsible nuclear nations do not talk and act in such a provocative and incendiary fashion.
- Even as we condemn these Russian policies, we recognize that the P3 must continue to pursue channels of communication with the Russian government on military and strategic, including nuclear, policy issues. Given the mistaken fears evinced by President Putin about Western attempts to foment a color revolution in and around Russia, it is critical that the P3 communicate clearly with the Russian government about our intentions and our policies. Russia's aggressive posture is entirely unjustified: NATO poses no threat to Russia, despite Russian perception to the contrary. Yet Moscow must also understand that our governments are completely committed to defending all the member countries of the NATO Alliance.

## NATO

- Russia's provocative behavior has brought the nuclear policy and the deterrence underpinnings of the NATO Alliance to the fore. In its deterrent policy, NATO has for more than two decades put emphasis on reducing the role of nuclear weapons while it adapts its deterrence strategy to support the new requirements of collective defense, crisis management, and common security. NATO has acted with great restraint. Its two most recent policy reviews, in 2010 and 2012, occurred in an era when many in the Alliance still believed U.S. bilateral offers to Russia on strategic weapons and the NATO-Russia partnership could bring more stability. NATO's project to integrate Russia and cooperate with it in a mutually beneficial European security order, based in part on nuclear arms control and disarmament, is not a realistic prospect in light of today's security environment. NATO leaders must recognize that nuclear weapons have a role and salience in the security strategy of potential adversaries that is high and rising. NATO cannot turn a blind eye to this reality. It must reaffirm that nuclear deterrence remains a key part of NATO strategy, and that the alliance has both the necessary means and will to implement that policy.
- The 2014 NATO Summit in Wales began the process of adjusting the Alliance's deterrent posture to the new challenge from Putin's Russia. In the nuclear domain, it reaffirmed the Alliance's commitment to sustain and modernize NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements and to find ways to broaden participation. It also set in motion a renewal of strategic communications, exercises, and other measures intended to demonstrate leadership focus on the nuclear missions (including, for example, leadership visits to key facilities). This is a responsibility of both civilian and military leaders. The Wales summit also revalidated the place of non-nuclear tools in the Alliance's



deterrence tool kit, including favorable local balances of conventional forces aimed at denying potential challengers a military fait accompli.

- But the 2014 Wales summit was only a starting point. The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw will be an opportunity to assess progress and initiate other efforts to ensure that the Alliance's deterrent and defense posture remains "fit for purpose" in the face of new challenges. Between now and then, Alliance leaders should review the Alliance's public narrative on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence more generally, with an eye to making a clear and powerful statement in Warsaw about the role that nuclear weapons play in underwriting Alliance security guarantees. NATO's current public narrative is neither reflective of nor responsive to the changing European security environment. The Alliance should again say that its nuclear weapons are political weapons that prevent war and preserve peace. This narrative must align with a comprehensive approach, encompassing diplomatic and military tools, to respond to Russia's coercive approach to nuclear weapons. Such a review must also include an assessment of Moscow's continued violations of multiple arms control treaties and commitments, some of which relate to nuclear weapons and some of which do not. We must make clear to Moscow that creating even the perception of an acceptable limited use of nuclear forces or lowering of the nuclear threshold would be highly destabilizing. NATO should also consider establishing a regular (perhaps quarterly) report that chronicles Russia's "nuclear messaging" (infringements of airspace, provocative deployments and public statements, etc.) to raise the awareness of both NATO leadership and the NATO member-state publics on the extent of Russia's coercive nuclear diplomacy.
- The 2016 Warsaw summit should also put in place a process to analyze the Alliance's full deterrence and defense toolkit relative to the new Russian challenge. Difficult questions must be addressed about the role of missile defense, conventional strike, cyber, and other means in meeting the challenge of a Russian military strategy that integrates all of these elements. The Alliance's three nuclear-armed members must also directly address how their national nuclear postures can be tailored to reinforce their NATO commitments. Tackling these issues will be politically difficult for the Alliance, but ignoring them would be perilous.
- Russian leaders, including President Putin, have asserted that the JCPOA obviates the need for NATO ballistic missile defense and thus that the failure to cancel the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) "proves" that missile defenses are directed at Russia. This is not the case. NATO needs to make clear that: (a) the JCPOA does not constrain ballistic missiles and Iran continues to develop them in violation of other UNSC resolutions, (b) Iran has not yet demonstrated sustained compliance with the JCPOA, and (c) the one-year breakout period that is the goal of the JCPOA is much shorter than the time needed for BMD deployment if the current EPAA program is interrupted. NATO should make a formal statement soon, to avoid failing to answer Russian charges, and repeat it at the Warsaw summit in order to engage senior NATO leaders.
- We recommend strongly that NATO Headquarters continue to reinvigorate its involvement in nuclear deterrence. To help ensure that Allied representatives are knowledgeable regarding the range of nuclear deterrent capabilities and processes that play essential roles in Alliance security, Permreps and Milreps should periodically visit NATO nuclear-ruled airbases and, on a rotating basis, a strategic nuclear base in each of the three nuclear-weapon Allied nations. Finally, we suggest that the Secretary General work with the U.S. and UK to make the Nuclear Planning Group Ministerial meetings more substantive, and that allies examine/explore ways to facilitate communication/interaction with French nuclear deterrence policy as needed.



- We observe that all the P3 governments have now organized nuclear seminars directed toward the next generation of experts and leaders, to maintain in a new international security environment a depth of knowledge of the requirements of deterrence and non-proliferation. We call for NATO to develop and adapt its programs for public diplomacy to include more elements on NATO nuclear posture and to open up to the next generation, in particular by welcoming more students and young professionals to NATO Headquarters.

### **P3 Interaction and Mutual Support**

- Recognizing the independent nature of the Alliance’s national deterrent forces, as well as the depth of existing bilateral cooperation channels which need to be preserved, we nevertheless believe that P3 governments should explore the desirability and feasibility of trilateral cooperation.
- On scientific, technical, and industrial matters, there may be some issues deserving consultations – and perhaps cooperation – “at three.” This would be aimed, in a spirit of reciprocity, at comparing notes, exchanging information, and (in some cases) saving money. We understand, however, that there are few such issues that would be better addressed “at three” than they are “at two.” The former should always complement, not replace, the latter.
- We also believe that the P3 should discuss “at three” hypothetical regional scenarios in which nuclear deterrence might come into play, to become familiar with the way each country thinks about such contingencies respectively.
- It is important to ensure that the U.S., the UK, and France are able to have secure, timely communications in a nuclear crisis through appropriate channels, at both the political and military levels. It is hard to imagine that there would be no circumstance under which the three nuclear powers would want to coordinate their strategic communications. In some scenarios, this would reinforce deterrence. They should also have the option of coordinating nuclear planning if needed.
- The P3 should think about how such consultations and possible coordination would relate to NATO. However, the three countries also have global interests – and a crisis in Asia, for instance, would not necessarily involve their NATO allies.
- We are cognizant of and concerned about the continuing evolution of nuclear capabilities in the Asia Pacific region. The P3 must continue to scrutinize the expansion and progression of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, India-Pakistan arms competition, and Chinese modernization of its nuclear arsenal. We also note that the NATO nuclear debate is closely monitored in Asia by states whose security in the region depends at least in part upon American extended deterrence.
- Given this complex global context, increasing P3 cooperation is important, but maintaining each P3 nation’s independence in decision-making and action and reinforcing deterrence remain the overriding considerations.

### **The NPT and the NPT Process**

- We continue to believe that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the central mechanism through which the international community should address the three related challenges of combating the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting disarmament, and enabling access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy only under appropriate safeguards. We support the importance of the consensus principle in all NPT decision-making.



- As a matter of priority, the P3 should engage with other NPT parties to strengthen the barriers to and the costs of breakout by states technically in compliance with the treaty.

### **The “Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons” Movement**

We continue to discuss and observe the “Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons” Movement. We have major concerns about this movement:

- First, by focusing solely on nuclear weapons it dismisses the threat and profound impacts of major conventional war among the great powers. We believe nuclear weapons have contributed since 1945 to preventing such a war. We believe any meaningful conversation of nuclear deterrence must address the international security environment, including this threat.
- Second, it has the potential to undercut the NPT’s decades-long non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, by exporting these fundamental NPT issues outside of the Treaty’s primary fora.
- Third, in practice, the Movement only affects the policy debate in democratic states. Nuclear weapons are also deployed by authoritarian and totalitarian states.
- We are concerned that the “Austrian Pledge” aims to affect the perceived legitimacy and credibility of deterrence, including extended deterrence, and call upon allies to refrain from lending credence to it.





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